IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
Before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences

In re Patent Application of

THOMPSON et al.

Serial No. 09/589,200

Filed: June 8, 2000

Title: TASK MANAGEMENT

Atty Dkt. 36-1494
C#   M#

TC/A.U.: 2191

Examiner: Nahar, Q.

Date: February 16, 2006

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

☐ **Correspondence Address Indication Form Attached.**

☐ **NOTICE OF APPEAL**
Applicant hereby **appeals** to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences
from the last decision of the Examiner twice/finally rejecting $500.00 (1401)/$250.00 (2401) $
applicant's claim(s).

☒ An appeal **BRIEF** is attached in the pending appeal of the
above-identified application $500.00 (1402)/$250.00 (2402) $ 500.00

☐ Credit for fees paid in prior appeal without decision on merits   -$ (   )

☐ A reply brief is attached.   **(no fee)**

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Any future submission requiring an extension of time is hereby stated to include a petition for such time extension.
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any <u>deficiency</u>, or credit any overpayment, in the fee(s) filed, or
asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this
firm) to our **Account No. 14-1140.** A <u>duplicate</u> copy of this sheet is attached.

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By Atty: Raymond Y. Mah, Reg. No. 41,426

Signature: _____

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES
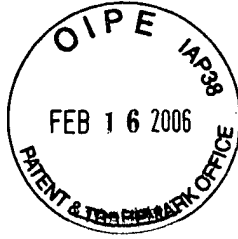
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APPEAL BRIEF

Sir:

Appellant hereby **appeals** to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences from

the last decision of the Examiner.

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(I)   <u>REAL PARTY IN INTEREST</u>

The real party in interest is British Telecommunications public limited company, a corporation of the country of England.

(II)   <u>RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES</u>

The present application is related to co-pending U.S. application no. 09/739,317

filed December 19, 2000. U.S. application no. 09/739,317 is a CIP of the present

application. An Appeal Brief is being concurrently filed in this related application.

(III) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-29 are pending and have been rejected. No claims have been substantively allowed. Claims 1-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Gryphon (U.S. Patent No. 6,233,537, hereinafter "Gryphon") in view of Ernst (U.S. Patent No. 5,890,133, hereinafter "Ernst").

(IV) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An Amendment/Response was filed on November 14, 2005 (i.e., after the date of the Final Rejection). The Advisory Action mailed December 15, 2005 indicated that the amendments of the November 14, 2005 Amendment/Response would be entered for purposes of appeal. The claims presented in section VIII (Claims Appendix) of this Appeal Brief therefore include the amendments of the November 14, 2005 Amendment/Response.

(V) SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The invention of the claims relates to a service provision system/method for use in

distributed processing environments. A listing of each independent claim, each

dependent claim argued separately and each claim having means plus function language

is provided below including exemplary reference(s) to page and line number(s) of the

specification.

1.   A method of generating a process plan comprising:

i)   storing at least one generic process plan, [pg. 7, ll. 20-22 and 25-28]

ii)   storing at least one non-generic process element containing a predetermined

pattern, [pg. 7, ll. 23-24; pg. 7, l. 29 - pg. 8, l. 4]

iii)   searching said at least one generic process plan for the predetermined

pattern contained by at least one non-generic process element, [pg. 8, ll. 12-

15]

iv)   on detection of the predetermined pattern, inserting content from said at

least one non-generic process element into the generic process plan to

generate a process plan and [pg. 8, ll. 5-15]

v)   outputting the generated process plan, [pg. 8, ll. 1-4; Fig. 4]

wherein an instruction coded into each of the at least one non-generic process

element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the

generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan. [pg. 3, ll. 7-9; pg. 6, ll. 24-28;

pg. 8, ll. 5-9]

2.   A method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of receiving for storage at least one generic process plan and receiving for storage at least one non-generic process element. [pg. 16, ll. 5-6]

3.   A method according to claim 1 wherein each stored generic process plan is indexed in accordance with a goal to be achieved by the plan and the method further comprises:

vi)   receiving a goal input, and

vii)   selecting a generic process plan for searching, said selection being in accordance with the received goal input. [pg. 15, l. 26 - pg. 16, l. 9; Figs. 11-12]

4.   A method according to claim 1 wherein at least one non-generic process element comprises resource information, identifying one or more resources to support a process step in a generated process plan. [pg. 16, ll. 9-11]

5.   A method according to claim 4 wherein each stored non-generic process element comprising resource information is indexed in accordance with one or more relevant resources. [pg. 16, ll. 9-11]

6.   A method according to claim 1 wherein content inserted from the at least one non-generic process element comprises data. [pg. 7, l. 24 - pg. 8, l. 4; pg. 10, l. 1 - pg. 11, l. 5]

7.   A method according to claim 1 wherein at least one non-generic process element comprises context specific method steps or data and is indexed for storage according to the relevant context. [pg. 16, ll. 9-11]

8.   A method according to claim 7 wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is service type. [pg. 11, ll. 15-17; pg. 13, ll. 4-6]

9.   A method according to claim 7 wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is customer type. [pg. 11, ll. 15-17; pg. 13, ll. 4-5]

10.   Apparatus for use in generating a process plan, the apparatus comprising:

i)   a generic process plan store, [pg. 7, ll. 20-22 and 25-28]

ii)   a non-generic process element store, [pg. 7, ll. 23-24; pg. 7, l. 29 - pg. 8, l. 4]

iii)   means for searching at least one process plan for at least one predetermined pattern contained in at least one non-generic process element, [pg. 8, ll. 12-15]

iv)   means for inserting content from said at least one non-generic process element into the generic process plan on detection of the predetermined pattern so as to generate a process plan, and [pg. 8, ll. 5-15]

v)   an output for generated process plans, [pg. 8, ll. 1-4; Fig. 4]

wherein an instruction coded into each of the at least one non-generic process element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the

generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan. [pg. 3, ll. 7-9; pg. 6, ll. 24-28; pg. 8, ll. 5-9]

11.   An apparatus according to claim 10 further comprising means for receiving for storage at least one generic process plan and receiving for storage at least one non-generic process element. [pg. 16, ll. 5-6]

12.   An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein each stored generic process plan is indexed in accordance with a goal to be achieved by the plan and the apparatus further comprises:

vi)   means for receiving a goal input, and

vii)   means for selecting a generic process plan for searching, said selection being in accordance with the received goal input. [pg. 15, l. 26 - pg. 16, l. 9; Figs. 11-12]

13.   An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein at least one non-generic process element comprises resource information, identifying one or more resources to support a process step in a generated process plan. [pg. 16, ll. 9-11]

14.   An apparatus according to claim 13 wherein each stored non-generic process element comprising resource information is indexed in accordance with one or more relevant resources. [pg. 16, ll. 9-11]

15. An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein content inserted from the at least one non-generic process element comprises data. [pg. 7, l. 29 - pg. 8, l. 4; pg. 10, l. 1 - pg. 11, l. 5]

16. An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein at least one non-generic process element comprises context specific method steps or data and is indexed for storage according to the relevant context. [pg. 16, ll. 9-11]

17. An apparatus according to claim 16 wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is service type. [pg. 11, ll. 15-17; pg. 13, ll. 4-6]

18. An apparatus according to claim 16 wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is customer type. [pg. 11, ll. 15-17; pg. 13, ll. 4-5]

19. An apparatus as in claim 10 wherein the content introduces new process steps with respect to the generic process plan. [pg. 8, l. 10]

20. An apparatus as in claim 10 wherein the content advises existing process steps of the generic process plan. [pg. 8, ll. 10-11]

21. A method as in claim 1 wherein the content introduces new process steps with respect to the generic process plan. [pg. 8, l. 10]

22.   A method as in claim 1 wherein the content advises existing process steps of the generic process plan. [pg. 8, ll. 10-11]

23.   An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is customer type. [pg. 11, ll. 15-17; pg. 13, ll. 4-5]

24.   A method as in claim 1, wherein instructions respectively coded into non-generic process elements determine a sequence in which said non-generic process elements are merged into said generic process plan. [pg. 7, l. 29 - pg. 8, l. 9]

25.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element introduces new process steps into said generic process plan. [pg. 8, l. 10]

26.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element advises existing process steps in said generic process plan. [pg. 8, ll. 10-11]

27.   An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein instructions respectively coded into non-generic process elements determine a sequence in which said non-generic process elements are merged into said generic process plan. [pg. 7, l. 29 - pg. 8, l. 9]

28.   An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element introduces new process steps into said generic process plan. [pg. 8, l. 10]

29.   An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element advises existing process steps in said generic process plan. [pg. 8, ll. 10-11]

(VI) <u>GROUND(S) OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL</u>

Claims 1-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Gryphon et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,233,537, hereinafter "Gryphon") in view of Ernst (U.S. Patent No. 5,890,133).

(VII) ARGUMENT

Claims 1-29 are not made "obvious" under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Gryphon in view of Ernst.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. The combination of Gryphon and Ernst fails to teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. For example, the combination fails to teach or suggest searching a generic process plan for a predetermined pattern contained in a non-generic process element and inserting content from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan on detection of the predetermined pattern to generate a process plan, wherein an instruction coded into the non-generic process element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan, as required by claims 1-29.

Gryphon teaches a modelling language called visual business modeling language (visual BML) for the visual presentation of business applications composed of multiple "plan elements." Visual BML is organized around a set of defined pictograms, each capable of representing elements of the application in progressively finer detail. Each pictogram (referred to as a "plan"), describes the attributes and relationships of a single planned process. Each pictogram represents an element primitive which is independently adjustable, and can be modified or enhanced without damage to the overall process because each element represents a delegation of a task primitive (including data storage), and the abstraction models can be loosely coupled. (See col. 1, lines 53 to 64). For example, the visual BML disclosed by Gryphon utilizes a pentagon symbol 145 to represent a step, a triangle symbol 156 to represent an action, a diamond symbol 154 to

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represent a business rule, a star symbol 152 to represent an event, and a hexagon symbol 135 to represent a translation map. Visual BML is therefore simply a method of graphical notation that can be used to represent business process knowledge and the corresponding business information that comprises the business model. It does not directly relate to any semantic elements in a programming language. Indeed, the symbols can be used to represent a business model <u>without</u> a computer (col. 1, lines 4-42). Gryphon discloses that the visual BML "is not limited to computer-based implementations: hand-drawn models (as with pen and ink on paper or chalk on a blackboard) are also within the scope" of the disclosed system. (See col. 8, lines 31-35).

Visual BML appears to be somewhat similar to developing a flow chart to represent a business process, although Gryphon purports that visual BML is different from developing an ordinary flowchart in various ways as described in col. 1, line 66 to col. 2, line 29 and col. 8, lines 38-61.

Pages 4 and 10 of the Final Office Action allege that col. 6, lines 1-20, col. 6, lines 47-67 and col. 7, lines 1-57 of Gryphon disclose the above-noted limitations. Section 11 of the Advisory Action repeats this allegation. Appellant respectfully disagrees.

Page 4 of the Final Office Action states "'Action' is interpreted as a non-generic process element, where 'Action' is associated with 'Step'. A generic process plan is defined as a sequence of Steps...." Even assuming arguendo that these interpretations are accepted, Gryphon fails to teach or suggest the above noted limitations. Ernst fails to remedy this deficiency of Gryphon.

In particular, Gryphon fails to teach or suggest searching a generic process plan for a predetermined pattern contained by at least one non-generic process element. For

example, Gryphon fails to teach or suggest searching a sequence of steps (the alleged "generic process plan"), let alone searching the sequence of steps for a predetermined pattern contained by an action (the alleged "non-generic process element").

Moreover, Gryphon fails to further teach or suggest inserting content from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan to generate a process plan on detection of the predetermined pattern. In particular, Gyphon fails to teach or suggest inserting content from an action (the alleged "non-generic process element") into the sequence of steps (the alleged "generic process plan") to generate a process plan on detection of a predetermined pattern contained by the action.

Even further, Gryphon fails to further teach or suggest instructions for determining how content is merged being coded into the non-generic process element. For example, Gryphon fails to disclose instructions for determining how content is merged being coded into the action (the alleged "non-generic process element"). Ernst fails to remedy any of the above noted deficiencies of Gryphon.

Neither of col. 6, lines 1-20 nor col. 6, line 47 - col. 7, line 57 (specifically identified in the Final Office Action and the Advisory Action) teaches or suggests searching a sequence of steps (the alleged "generic process plan") for a predetermined pattern contained by an action (the alleged "non-generic process element"). There is absolutely no teaching in Gryphon or Ernst of applying a search process to the sequence of steps disclosed by Gryphon in order to find a predetermined pattern which is contained in an action of Gryphon.

The above cited portions of Gryphon merely disclose providing a pictorial set of visual BML symbols and recording them (even on paper) to characterize a business

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process which is being analyzed. Actions that are defined are merely associated with certain steps. (See col. 7, lines 50-52 stating "In stage 637, the Actions defined in stage 633 are associated to the steps defined in stage 610."). Merely associating actions to particular steps does not in any way teach or suggest searching a generic process plan for a predetermined pattern contained by a non-generic process element, and inserting content from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan to generate a process plan upon detection of the predetermined pattern.

The portions (col. 6, lines 1-20; and col. 6, line 47 to col. 7, line 57) of Gryphon which were specifically identified in the arguments section (page 10) of the Final Office Action and section 11 of the Advisory Action are now discussed in detail.

Col. 6, lines 1-20 of Gryphon discloses an action symbol 156 and a catch event symbol 152 as examples of visual BML symbols. These visual BML symbols form notation to record a business process. Recordation of these and other visual BML symbols may be made on paper. An action symbol 156 represents how work is done, whereas step information includes when and under what conditions the work is to be performed within a process. A catch event symbol 152 represents an external event that initiates a portion of the business process. Writing an action symbol 156 and/or a catch event symbol 152 on paper as visual BML symbols to record a business process clearly does not involve searching a generic process plan for a predetermined pattern contained by a non-generic process element, let alone inserting content from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan to generate a process plan upon detection of the predetermined pattern as alleged by the Final Office Action and Advisory Action. The description of the action symbol 156 and the catch event symbol 152 also does not

further disclose "wherein an instruction coded into each of the at least one non-generic process element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan."

Col. 6, line 47 to col. 7, line 57 of Gryphon describes a process for recording a business model using visual BML symbols (*see* Fig. 6 and col. 7, lines 41-57) and a specific example of this process (*see* Figs. 2-5 and col. 6, line 47 to col. 7, line 40). The specific example involves recording the business process of processing incoming customer phone call using visual BML symbols on paper. Fig. 2 shows recording on paper the process of "Incoming Customer Call" (step 220) having the following three main steps: "Identify Customer" (step 230), "Review Entitlement" (step 240), and "Address Customer Issue" (step 250).

Fig. 3 shows another sheet of paper on which substeps of the identify customer step 310 are identified. The sheet of paper represented by Fig. 3 in the visual BML recordation process includes the step "Search by Name" (step 320), and a step "Search by Company" (step 340) which would be performed if the rule "Customer Not Found?" represented by business rule symbol 330 is satisfied. Actions associated with steps 320 and 340 are illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, respectively.

Neither the "Search by Name" step (step 320) nor the "Search by Company" step (step 340) discloses searching a generic process plan for predetermined pattern contained in a non-generic process element, let alone inserting content from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan on detection of the predetermined pattern to generate a process plan. That is, the recordation of the step "Search by Name" and the step "Search by Company" does not disclose searching a process plan for a

predetermined pattern contained in a non-generic process element as claimed. Indeed, this portion of Gryphon merely discloses recordation of these steps on a piece of paper. No search is actually performed by simply recording these steps on a piece of paper. Moreover, even when the process represented by the visual BML symbols as described in cols. 6-7 of Gryphon is actually performed, the performed search will be a search of a data storage device holding customer account information or company information. (*See, e.g.,* page 7, lines 19-20). The performed search does not involve searching a generic process plan. The "Search by Name" step and "Search by Company" step is merely part of an exemplary business process which is being recorded by the visual BML notation on paper. It is not in any sense an instruction or teaching of the visual BML user to carry out a search of the type required by the claims.

The combination of Gryphon and Ernst further fails to teach or suggest "wherein an instruction coded into each of the at least one non-generic process element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan," as required by independent claim 1. Similar comments apply to independent claim 10.

While Ernst describes how a dynamic behavior of a flow of business processes can be considered in optimizing the business process, the term "dynamic" in Ernst is used in the sense of "changing over the course of time" (see feedback branch 109) rather than in the computational sense of at runtime.

Col. 7, lines 9-23 (specifically identified in the Final Office Action) of Ernst discloses the following:

"Thereby, in Step 107, the run data is used for verifying the result data and, per Step 108, for updating the attribute values of the parameters upon the latest state. By this measure, the workflow is dynamically adapted to the actual process behavior.

Possible modifications of components and business targets (such as modifying the business target 'costs' or additional resources, if available) are taken into consideration through the feedback branch 109. Each modification of a workflow component or a resource is treated like an additional level setting which initiates a further cycle of experiments per Step 105. That, in connection with the attribute values updated upon the latest state of the parameters, and the result data lead to a dynamic optimization of the workflow."

While the above portion of Ernst discloses "the run data is used for verifying the result data", the run data is for example, an amount of runtime in a non-computational context such as the total time a particular business process takes to be executed (see col. 8, lines 20-47).

Moreover, even if col. 7, lines 9-23 of Ernst discloses generating a process plan at runtime as alleged by the Final Office Action, there is no teaching or suggestion in the Gryphon/Ernst combination of an instruction coded into a non-generic process element determining how content is merged from that element into a generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan.

Dependent claim 3 further requires each stored generic process plan being indexed in accordance with a goal to be achieved by the plan and selecting a generic process plan for searching in accordance with a received goal input. Page 5, lines 4-8 of the Final Office Action alleges that col. 6, lines 1-14 of Gryphon discloses these claimed features. Appellant respectfully disagrees. Col. 6, lines 1-14 of Gryphon states the following:

"Action
An Action symbol 156 represents how work is done whereas Step information indicates when and under what conditions the work is performed within a process. An Action is a bridge between business

and program logic. Actions perform work while Steps coordinate the actions. An Action can also be composed of lower-level Actions that provide increased detail of exactly how the work is to be performed.

Actions can be essential actions that are predefined as constant components of Visual BML or they can be compound actions that are created by the user.

Examples of an Action would be 'Retrieve Customer Information' or 'Assign Call to Support Queue'."

There is absolutely no teaching of each stored generic plan being indexed in accordance with a goal to be achieved. Nor is there any disclosure in the above portion of Gryphon (or in combination with Ernst) regarding receiving a goal input, let alone selecting a generic process plan for searching in accordance with the received goal input. Col. 6, lines 1-14 of Gryphon discloses an action. The Final Office Action and the Advisory Action both alleged that the action of Gryphon disclosed the non-generic process element, and thus this portion of Gryphon cannot possibly teach or suggest the features of the generic process plan required by claim 3.

With respect to dependent claims 5 and 7, Appellant submits that Gryphon fails to disclose the indexing as claimed. The Final Office Action apparently alleges that col. 6, lines 56-66 of Gryphon discloses the features in claim 5 or claim 7. Appellant respectfully disagrees. Col. 6, lines 56-66 of Gryphon states the following:

"For each of the Steps defined in FIG. 2, a more detailed analysis (involving more low-level Steps) needs to be performed. For the purposes of this example, we take 'Identify Customer' Step 230 and examine it further. On another sheet of paper (FIG. 3) place 'Identify Customer' Step 310 at the top left hand corner. In our process, searching in the customer database for their names (sub Step 320) identifies callers. If that fails, a search is performed by the company name (sub Step 340), and it is determined if the caller appears on the valid contact list."

As can plainly be seen, the above cited portion of Gryphon fails to disclose the indexing required by claim 5 or 7. This portion of Gryphon merely discloses writing visual BML symbols on sheets of paper.

Claim 8 depends from claim 7 and further requires "wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is service type." Claim 9 depends from claim 7 and further requires "wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is customer type." The Final Office Action identifies col. 6, lines 46-66 of Gryphon for the limitation of claim 8 but without any further comment. Col. 6, lines 46-66 describes the steps of Fig. 2. The Examiner has alleged that the series of steps discloses the **generic** process plan. Accordingly, it is unclear to Appellant how col. 6, lines 46-66 can possibly disclose the context for at least one **non**-generic process element. Similar comments apply to claim 9.

Appellant thus requests that the rejection of claims 1-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103 be reversed.
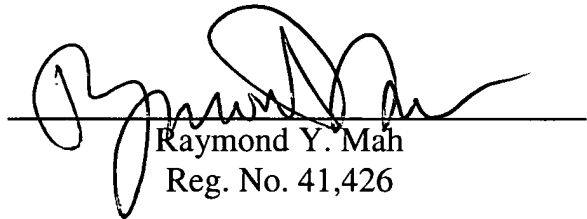
<u>CONCLUSION</u>

In conclusion it is believed that the application is in clear condition for allowance;

therefore, early reversal of the Final Rejection and passage of the subject application to

issue are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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(VIII)   CLAIMS APPENDIX

1.   A method of generating a process plan comprising:

i)   storing at least one generic process plan,

ii)   storing at least one non-generic process element containing a predetermined pattern,

iii)   searching said at least one generic process plan for the predetermined pattern contained by at least one non-generic process element,

iv)   on detection of the predetermined pattern, inserting content from said at least one non-generic process element into the generic process plan to generate a process plan and

v)   outputting the generated process plan,

wherein an instruction coded into each of the at least one non-generic process element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan.

2.   A method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of receiving for storage at least one generic process plan and receiving for storage at least one non-generic process element.

3.   A method according to claim 1 wherein each stored generic process plan is indexed in accordance with a goal to be achieved by the plan and the method further comprises:

vi)   receiving a goal input, and

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vii)   selecting a generic process plan for searching, said selection being in

accordance with the received goal input.

4.   A method according to claim 1 wherein at least one non-generic process

element comprises resource information, identifying one or more resources to support a

process step in a generated process plan.

5.   A method according to claim 4 wherein each stored non-generic process

element comprising resource information is indexed in accordance with one or more

relevant resources.

6.   A method according to claim 1 wherein content inserted from the at least

one non-generic process element comprises data.

7.   A method according to claim 1 wherein at least one non-generic process

element comprises context specific method steps or data and is indexed for storage

according to the relevant context.

8.   A method according to claim 7 wherein the context for at least one non-

generic process element is service type.

9.   A method according to claim 7 wherein the context for at least one non-

generic process element is customer type.

10.   Apparatus for use in generating a process plan, the apparatus comprising:

i)   a generic process plan store,

ii)   a non-generic process element store,

iii)   means for searching at least one process plan for at least one predetermined

pattern contained in at least one non-generic process element,

iv)   means for inserting content from said at least one non-generic process

element into the generic process plan on detection of the predetermined

pattern so as to generate a process plan, and

v)   an output for generated process plans,

wherein an instruction coded into each of the at least one non-generic process

element determines how content is merged from the non-generic process element into the

generic process plan at runtime of the generic process plan.

11.   An apparatus according to claim 10 further comprising means for receiving

for storage at least one generic process plan and receiving for storage at least one non-

generic process element.

12.   An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein each stored generic process

plan is indexed in accordance with a goal to be achieved by the plan and the apparatus

further comprises:

vi)   means for receiving a goal input, and

vii)   means for selecting a generic process plan for searching, said selection

being in accordance with the received goal input.

13. An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein at least one non-generic process element comprises resource information, identifying one or more resources to support a process step in a generated process plan.

14. An apparatus according to claim 13 wherein each stored non-generic process element comprising resource information is indexed in accordance with one or more relevant resources.

15. An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein content inserted from the at least one non-generic process element comprises data.

16. An apparatus according to claim 10 wherein at least one non-generic process element comprises context specific method steps or data and is indexed for storage according to the relevant context.

17. An apparatus according to claim 16 wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is service type.

18. An apparatus according to claim 16 wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is customer type.

19. An apparatus as in claim 10 wherein the content introduces new process steps with respect to the generic process plan.

20. An apparatus as in claim 10 wherein the content advises existing process steps of the generic process plan.

21. A method as in claim 1 wherein the content introduces new process steps with respect to the generic process plan.

22. A method as in claim 1 wherein the content advises existing process steps of the generic process plan.

23. An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the context for at least one non-generic process element is customer type.

24. A method as in claim 1, wherein instructions respectively coded into non-generic process elements determine a sequence in which said non-generic process elements are merged into said generic process plan.

25. A method as in claim 1, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element introduces new process steps into said generic process plan.

26. A method as in claim 1, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element advises existing process steps in said generic process plan.

27.   An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein instructions respectively coded into non-generic process elements determine a sequence in which said non-generic process elements are merged into said generic process plan.

28.   An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element introduces new process steps into said generic process plan.

29.   An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein said instruction coded into each of said at least one non-generic process element advises existing process steps in said generic process plan.

(IX)   EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

(X)   <u>RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX</u>

None